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ABSTRACT

This newsletter issue offers six articles on employment of people with disabilities. "Employment and People with Disabilities: Challenges for the Nineties" (Frank Bowe) discusses the Americans with Disabilities Act, issues in unemployment and under-education, earnings, and implications for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. "The National Supported Employment Initiative: Expanding Employment Opportunities for Persons with Severe Disabilities" (Paul Wehman and others) presents findings, from a 1989 update of an ongoing national study of supported employment implmentation, which aims to gauge the progress made in incorporating supported employment into the existing rehabilitation service system, identify national trends regarding major policy issues, and identify the amount and sources of state funds to operate supported employment programs. "Training Students with Learning Disabilities for Careers in the Human Services" (Jane E. Herzog) proposes that the field of human services is an excellent alternative to other types of vocations for workers with learning disabilities and describes programs of the Para-Educator Center for Young Adults at New York University. "Projects with Industry" (John Eger) is described as a federal program composed of three elements: a linkage to the private sector via an advisory council; a training site, generally a rehabilitation facility; and a source of people with disabilities, generally the state vocational rehabilitation agency. "Help Wanted: People with Disabilities Needed" (Mark Donovan) focuses on a school-to-work transition program developed by the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities, called "Bridges." "Employment and Workers with Disabilities" (Reed Greenwood) addresses issues of where workers with disabilities stand in regard to employment, what can be done to improve opportunities of workers with disabilities for meaningful work, and what types of jobs are likely to be available in the future. (JDD)

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OSERS NEWS IN PRINT!

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

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United States Department of Education

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EMPLOYMENT AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

CHALLENGES FOR THE NINETIES

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Few aspects of labor market economics are as discouraging as are the figures on employment among people with disabilities. What can we as a nation do to assist them in finding and keeping good jobs? And what role can OSERS in particular play?

The formula for success seems obvious enough. Individuals with disabilities should be educated so as to prepare for their entry into the world of work. They should receive counseling, placement, independent living, and on-the-job support services, as needed. And they should be protected against unjust discrimination on the basis of disability in employment and in those activities of daily life that are essential to employment, notably housing and transportation. We as a nation are doing these things, and have been for some time. The evidence, however, is that we've not done them well enough. The Americans with Disabilities Act [P.L. 101-336] will help. As we await its implementation, we need to ask: "How are we doing? What else should we be doing?"

"Not working is perhaps the truest definition of what it means to be disabled."

The three organizational units of OSERS contribute, each in its own way, to enhancing employment among people with disabilities. The OSERS Mission Statement focuses upon "individual potential and maximum participation and productivity in society." The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) supports state and local education programs preparing young people with disabilities for work. The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) sponsors research and demonstration projects, many of which highlight ways to improve employability of adults with disabilities. And the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) supports state and local counseling and job training programs, many of which place adults with disabilities in jobs.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Title I of ADA, which becomes effective July 26, 1992, vastly expands employment rights for

people with disabilities. For the first time, small and medium-sized private employers will be required by federal law to practice nondiscrimination toward applicants and employees with disabilities. Given that U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics projections indicate that such firms will continue to dominate job creation during the 1990s, advocates appear to be justified in holding out high hopes that Title I will advance employment among people with disabilities. The other titles of ADA will help as well: Title II on transportation in particular, Title III on access to the community for independent living, and Title IV for access to telecommunications.

NOT WORKING

The 1986 "ICD Survey of Disabled Americans" stated: "Not working is perhaps the truest definition of what it means to be disabled." That remains true. In America today, employment is most common among people who are over the age of 15 but under the age of 65, and among those not living in institutions. This group is referred to by demographers as the "working-age" population. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census' March 1988 Current Population Survey (CPS), only 32 percent of working-age adults with disabilities work or actively seek employment. Stated differently, more than two-thirds of adults with disabilities are not working. By contrast, 79 percent of non-disabled adults in the same age range are in the labor force.

The picture among women with disabilities is even worse. Only 27 percent of work-disabled women participate in the labor force (work or actively seek employment), compared to 69 percent of non-disabled women. Among blacks with a disability, just 22 percent participate in the labor force, compared to 79 percent of non-disabled blacks. Disabled persons of Hispanic origin participate in the labor force at a 23 percent rate, vs. 74 percent of non-disabled Hispanic persons.

Even 15 years after enactment of P.L. 94-142, adults with work disabilities contribute disproportionately to the population of under educated Americans.

The irony is that labor force participation by adults with disabilities is decreasing. As recently as 1970, the proportion was 41 percent. Although recessions in 1974, 1979, and 1982 contributed -- workers with disabilities often are "the last hired and the first fired" -- the decline seems also attributable to the introduction nationwide of Supplemental Security Income in 1974. Many adults with disabilities believe they can do better on SSI than they can by working. For many, that unfortunately is true: their education prepares them only for entry-level, minimum-wage jobs.

UNDER-EDUCATION

In part, the low labor force participation figures reflect under-education. Even 15 years after enactment of P.L. 94-142, adults with work disabilities contribute disproportionately to the population of under educated Americans. The 1988 CPS shows that 16-64 year old adults with work disabilities are four times as likely as are non-disabled adults never to have completed eighth grade. Fully 41 percent of adults with disabilities lack even a high-school diploma. Those with no disabilities are almost three times more likely to be college graduates than are adults with disabilities. The 25-64 age range is useful for examining education, because by age 25 people presumably have completed their formal schooling, or at least most of it. We see in the 1988 CPS that 9 percent of work-disabled adults in this age range have a college degree; among all Americans in this age range, 23 percent have such a degree. This despite the fact that section 504 regulations have, since mid-1977, protected applicants and students against unjust discrimination in American higher education.

The most recent data give little reason for optimism that

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levels of education are improving sufficiently as to raise employment among adults with disabilities. OSEP's *Twelfth Annual Report to Congress on Implementation of The Education of the Handicapped Act* (1990) states that 27 percent of school leavers in the 1988-1989 school year were drop outs. The five-year National Transition Longitudinal Study (NTLS) sponsored by OSEP reported an even higher 36 percent drop out rate among 3,000 school leavers in 1985-1987. By contrast, only 15 percent of those out of school one or two years were studying at postsecondary education programs; only 2 percent were enrolled in four year colleges. In part, these low levels appear due to low grades in elementary and secondary school; the NTLS reported that students with disabilities received, on average, "C" grades, or 2.0 on a scale of 4.0. Equally distressing, the NTLS shows that about one in every four students with disabilities taking a minimum competency test failed it.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Among both men and women with work disabilities, 14.2 percent of those in the labor force were unemployed when the 1988 CPS was done. The comparable rates among non-disabled men and women were, respectively, 6.2 percent and 5.2 percent, in March 1988. Thus, the unemployment rates for work-disabled persons are about double to triple those for non-disabled persons. The unemployment rate is a proportion. The numerator is comprised of the number of individuals without jobs who actively seek employment; the denominator has all individuals in the labor force, employed or seeking employment. There is no place in the formula for individuals who are not in the labor force. Thus, the rate is a reflection of how difficult persons who are actively seeking work are finding it to secure employment.

Fully 28 percent, or almost three in every ten, working-age adults with disabilities have family or personal incomes from all sources that place them below the poverty line.

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

That so many work-disabled adults report only a high school education suggests that many who work have blue collar jobs. Persons with a disability who work are more likely than non-disabled persons to have laborer and machine-operative jobs, more likely to have service jobs, and more likely to be self-employed. They are, by contrast, less likely to hold managerial/professional jobs and less likely to work in retail trade.

POVERTY

With so few working, it is hardly surprising that many live in poverty. Fully 28 percent, or almost three in every ten, working-age adults with disabilities have family or personal incomes from all sources that place them below the poverty line. That is particularly striking when one considers that the term "income" includes not only salary and wages but also Social Security payments, public assistance or welfare, and retirement income such as pensions. The median income of all working-age adults with a work disability was $6,323 in 1987; the mean was $9,364. Among severely disabled persons, the figures were $5,246 and $6,618, respectively.

EARNINGS

Of the 4,974,000 working-age adults with disabilities who had jobs at any time during 1987, the mean earnings were $12,253. That was 35 percent less than the $18,951 mean for non-disabled workers in the same age range. About one-third (35 percent) of all disabled workers held year-round, full-time (YRFT) jobs. Among those 1,732,000 disabled adults, mean earnings were $21,365. That was a much better 83 percent of the $25,662 mean for non-disabled YRFT workers. Males with disabilities averaged $15,497 (64 percent of the

$24,095 mean for non-disabled men), but $24,200 (81 percent of non-disabled men) if they worked YRFT. Females with disabilities made $8,075, and if YRFT, $15,796. Women without disabilities averaged 38 percent more overall, but the difference dropped to 16 percent, or by more than half, when YRFT earnings are compared.

One in ten adults with disabilities reported no income at all in 1987. These 1,362,000 16-64 year olds had neither earned nor unearned income; they depended upon family members or unrelated individuals for their full support. Among those reporting some income, about half received $6,000 or less.

Frank Bowe

IMPLICATIONS FOR OSERS

These data imply steps that OSERS, its three components, and states can take to enhance employment among people with disabilities. Of these, the first is to improve their education.

For adults with disabilities to be in a position to benefit fully from the rights the ADA will confer on them, they need to be well educated. Their educational attainment to date raises fundamental questions about special education in America today. Traditionally, education has swung between two competing priorities -- "equity" and "excellence." This has not been happening in special education. P.L. 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, is an Act that places exclusive stress upon equity: it provides rights for children and for parents so that no child, no matter how severely disabled, is denied an education from which he or she can benefit. As interpreted by the Supreme Court in *Rowley*, the first P.L. 94-142 case to reach that court, the Act assures only a minimum quality of education for children and youth with disabilities. The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990 do nothing to change that. Thus, there is little likelihood of federal legislative change to place greater emphasis upon quality at least until Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1995. However, OSERS has considerable latitude to act administratively. The challenge for OSERS and for OSEP in particular is to encourage states to place more emphasis on quality. The U.S. Congress Commission on Education of the Deaf urged OSERS to find ways to encourage quality in special education. OSERS has considerable authority to recognize and give awards to programs provid-

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ing excellence in special education. Education Secretary Lauro Cavazos and Assistant Secretary Robert Davila recently have called attention to issues of quality in special education. More of this is needed.

Meanwhile, there is much the states themselves can do. The Act requires each state to pass a law providing as much as does the Act itself -- but allows a state to go beyond the minimum federal requirements. One state that has done so is California, which has defined the cornerstone term "appropriate" in such a way as to improve significantly the chances that a child with a disability will receive a good education.

Such steps by OSERS and by the states are urgently needed. The 1989 report by Louis Harris and Associates, The ICD Survey III: A Report Card on Special Education, found that educators and school administrators perceived compliance with P.L. 94-142 to be the major objective. As an advisor to the Harris firm on this study, I was distressed to see that the attitude seemed to be that if the state were in compliance, nothing further was needed. Thus, the fact that few if any states made special education a part of their excellence initiatives following publication of A Nation at Risk, while distressing, is not surprising. The 1989 Harris report also highlighted the urgent need for improved transition services. Both parents and educators gave transition services the lowest ratings of all special education and related services supported by the Act.

Of OSERS' three organizational units, NIDRR has the most flexibility and the heaviest responsibility for providing innovation in services for persons with disabilities. The Institute could support demonstration projects illustrating how academic and pre-vocational preparation of children and youth with disabilities can be improved. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), too, has authority under Innovation and Expansion grant programs and under short- and long-term training programs to enhance pre-vocational training. The programs of these two OSERS components are to be reauthorized in 1991. The Congress and the disability field will be looking to OSERS to propose legislative changes that will improve employment among persons with disabilities.

Although the nation's economy is recessionary as this is written, the underlying trends in the labor market are powerful and will drive post-recession employment throughout the 1990s. As has been well-documented, particularly in reports from the Hudson Institute in Indiana, employment criteria are rising inexorably. The economy no longer can absorb large numbers of under-educated persons, whether disabled or not, into jobs that people with little education can do. Rather, even entry-level jobs now require workers to process complex data and make on-the-spot decisions. Meanwhile, the demographics of the working-age population are such that a shortage of employable people will persist through the decade.

The opportunities will be there for educated people with disabilities. Those not prepared for today's heightened job demands will be doubly handicapped. That is the challenge -- and the penalty for failure. Our last best hope for raising employment levels among persons with disabilities is to provide for them a quality education so that they can meet those job demands. Many of those hopes rest with OSERS and the programs it supports.

It is not, of course, solely OSERS' responsibility. Hopes rest, too, with implementation and enforcement, particularly by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, of ADA. The tough new protections accorded by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 offer hope that people with disabilities will at last be able to find accessible, affordable housing near places of employment. And it is possible that the complex web of work incentives and disincentives under Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance may be unravelled soon or at least well-enough communicated that some semblance of trust and understanding may be restored between the Social Security Administration and adults with disabilities.

But OSERS has a key role to play. I am one of many awaiting with anticipation the response of Dr. Davila and his colleagues in OSERS to these challenges before us.

THE NATIONAL SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES

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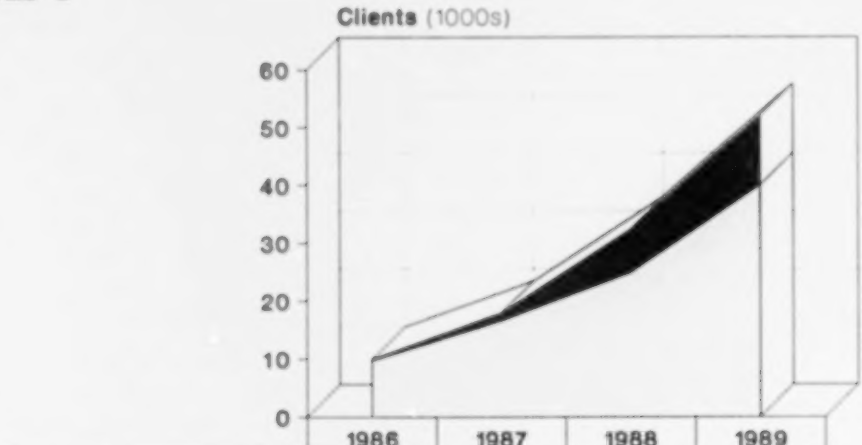
The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) of the U.S. Department of Education has directed policy and funding initiatives to support the development of supported employment service opportunities in all 50 states and D.C. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) awarded five-year discretionary grants to 10 states in 1985 and an additional 17 states in 1986. The purpose of these grants was to develop statewide systems of supported employment. These systems change projects were designed to foster movement from readiness oriented, segregated prevocational services for persons with severe disabilities to paid, community integrated employment opportunities with ongoing job site supports. These grants from Title III of the Rehabilitation Act were followed in 1987 by the Title VI, Part C formula grants available to vocational rehabilitation agencies in all 50 states to provide funds for the provision of supported employment services. The continuing federal initiative has resulted in the provision of supported employment services to a substantial number of persons with severe disabilities.

The Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment (VCU-RRTC) recently completed a Fiscal Year 1989 update of an ongoing national study of supported employment implementation. Initiated in 1988 to survey and analyze the implementation strategies, policies, and outcomes of the 27 states receiving the Title III systems change grants, the study now encompasses all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. The purpose of the study is to (1) gauge the progress that has been made in incorporating supported employment into the existing rehabilitation service system; (2) to identify national trends regarding major policy issues such as the availability of ongoing support services, the effect of supported employment on existing services, and the extent to which supported employment programs are serving individuals with the most severe disabilities; and (3) to identify the amount and sources of funds that states have obligated to operate supported employment programs. The study now covers Fiscal Years 1986 through 1989, and an FY 1990 update survey will soon be disseminated.

SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The data for FY 1986-1988 were obtained in two stages. First, the project managers of the 27 Title III systems change grants were surveyed during the summer and fall of 1988. The remaining 23 states and D.C. were surveyed in mid-1989. Within each state, information was collected from state agencies of vocational rehabilitation,

FIGURE 1



	1986	1987	1988	1989
Systems reporting	20	36	48	49
Total (thousands)	9.876	17.871	32.342	51.992
Non-Title III states	0.243	1.381	7.538	12.061
Title III states	9.633	16.49	24.804	39.931

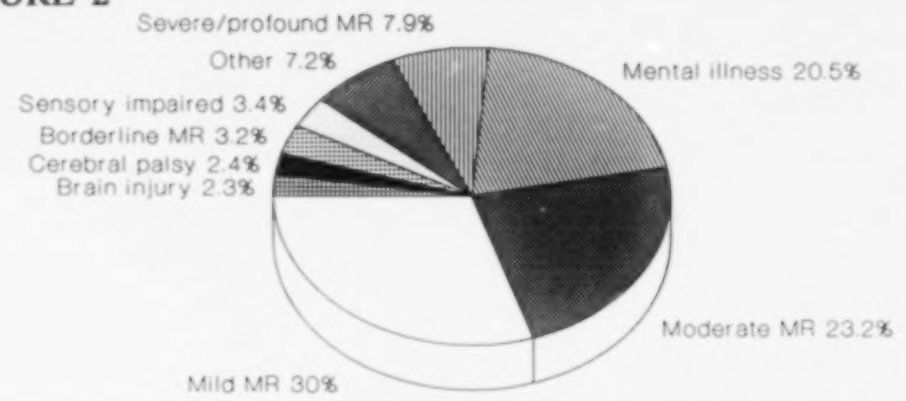
mental retardation/developmental disabilities, mental health, and other state-level agencies responsible for funding or for providing vocational and/or day support services to individuals with disabilities. The information solicited from these representatives centered around the following themes: emerging policies and procedures for implementing supported employment programs; key outcomes and characteristics of supported employment service delivery; and, fiscal activity associated with supported employment service delivery.

The FY 89 update was forwarded to the representatives of the 50 states and D.C. in early spring 1990. The ten question survey requested information in the following areas:

- o persons in supported employment positions by service models and annual cost per individual;
- o persons served in other day programs such as work activity or psychosocial rehabilitation;
- o new vocational rehabilitation clients for whom a supported employment outcome was planned as part of an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP);
- o supported employment participants closed successfully or unsuccessfully by the VR agency;
- o total authorized providers of supported employment services and type of providers;
- o primary disability classification of supported employment participants;
- o level of mental retardation (MR) for those persons carrying a primary MR disability classification and type of mental illness (MI) for those persons with a primary MI disability classification;
- o source and amounts of funds for time limited and extended services; and
- o projections for numbers of individuals with disabilities to be served in supported employment.

The information reported here for FY 1989 is based on verified data from 49 of the 51 systems surveyed.

FIGURE 2



SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The ability of individual state systems to report data specific to their supported employment programs improved considerably during the four fiscal years surveyed by the VCU-RRTC. Management information systems for supported employment programs vary substantially across states. State vocational rehabilitation agencies are now able to report on the number of participants and the dollars expended in the time limited component of their supported employment programs. Many extended service funding agencies have not yet developed reporting systems that match their VR counterparts. Reporting capacity on supported employment implementation continues to evolve. The supported employment implementation outcomes reflect both real growth and, also, the continually increasing capacity of state systems to collect and report data.

Growth in the Number of Individuals Served by Supported Employment Programs

Figure 1 presents FY 1986-1989 data on the number of supported employment participants as reported by 49 of the 51 systems surveyed. Supported employment participants include persons working and receiving time limited and/or extended services during the reporting year. Figure 1 presents, therefore, a cumulative picture of the growth in supported employment implementation occurring over a four year period.

A total of 9,876 individuals were served in supported employment during FY 1986 as reported by 20 systems. The remaining systems indicated that as of Fiscal Year 1986, they had not yet begun to provide supported employment services nor did they have data available on the number of participants. By FY 1987, the number of participants had increased 81 percent over FY 1986, as reported by 36 systems. The FY 1989 total represented a 61 percent increase over FY 1988 and a 426 percent over the FY 1986 number of participants.

A component of the growth in the number of supported employment participants is the relationship between the Title III systems change grant funded states and the non-Title III funded states. Figure 1 also presents FY 1986-1989 comparative data for the 27 Title III funded states and the 23 states plus D.C. that did not receive Title III grants. The Title III funded states clearly developed more quickly a service and reporting capacity for supported employment as compared to the non-Title III funded states.

Primary Disability of Supported Employment Participants

Figure 2 presents primary disability information for those

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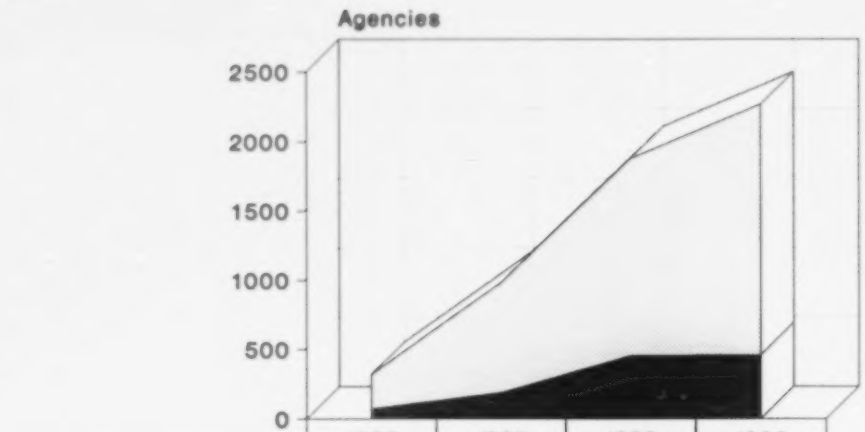
FIGURE 3



	1986	1987	1988	1989
Title III states	246	794	1423	1808
Non-Title III states	73	187	454	458
Total agencies	319	981	1877	2266
Systems reporting	18	23	34	49

supported employment participants for whom primary disability information was reported. Persons with mental retardation made up 64.3 percent of the reported total, and mental retardation continued in FY 1989 to be the largest disability category. Persons with mental illness were the second largest disability group served at 20.5 percent of the total. Persons with a variety of physical or unspecified disabilities made up the remaining 15.3 percent.

A total of 41 systems were able to provide complete or partial data for FY 1989 on the functioning level of supported employment participants for whom mental retardation was identified as their primary disability.

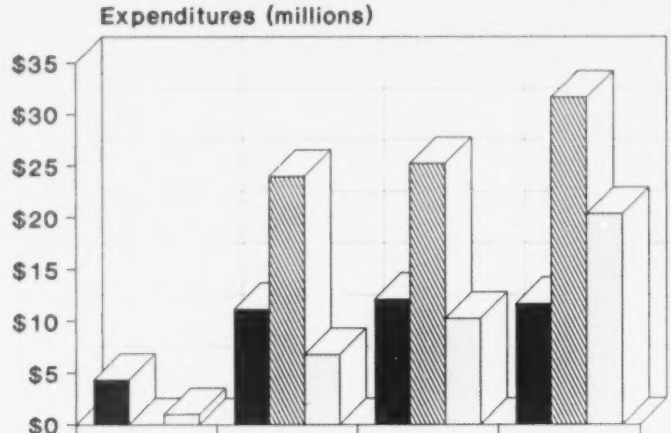
The Impact of Supported Employment Programs on the Service System: New Clients for the State VR Agencies

The implementation of supported employment programs within the vocational rehabilitation system consistently resulted in an *increase in new clients for whom supported employment was planned as a part of their initial Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP)* during the FY 1986-1989 period. For example, a total of 44 VR state systems reported 14,487 new clients for FY 1989, a 70 percent increase over the 8,522 new clients reported by 35 states in FY 1988.

Growth in the Number of Supported Employment Provider Agencies

The number of reported supported employment provider agencies continued to grow during each year surveyed. Figure 3 presents the cumulative number of newly established providers of supported employment services for Fiscal Years 1986-1989 broken down by Title III funded and non-Title III funded states. The total of 2,266 provider agencies for FY 1989 as reported by 49 systems represents a 21 percent increase from the FY 1988 total of 1,877 provider agencies reported by 34 systems. This increase resulted predominantly from improved reporting capacity. The primary real growth in the number of provider agencies

FIGURE 4



	1986	1987	1988	1989
Title III funds	$4.35	$11.141	$12.107	$11.691
Title VI(C) funds	$0	$24.01	$25.22	$31.665
Title I funds	$0.997	$6.786	$10.242	$20.331
Total (millions)	$5.347	$41.937	$47.569	$63.687

occurred between FY 1987 and FY 1988, during which time the FY 1987 total of 981 expanded by 91 percent to 1,877 in FY 1988. Figure 3 also demonstrates again the impact of the Title III grants, with 79.8 percent of the reported provider agencies in FY 1989 being located in the 27 Title III funded states.

The FY 1989 survey asked for provider agencies to be classified into three primary categories:

a) providers that terminated provision of traditional day services and began provision of supported employment;

b) providers that expanded service options to include supported employment and continue to provide traditional day programming; and

c) supported employment agencies with no history of providing traditional day programming.

Forty-five systems classified a total of 2,101 provider agencies for FY 1989, and 1,741 (82.9 percent) were in category (b). A very small percentage (1.8 percent) of the total reported were in category (a).

Type of Supported Employment Model

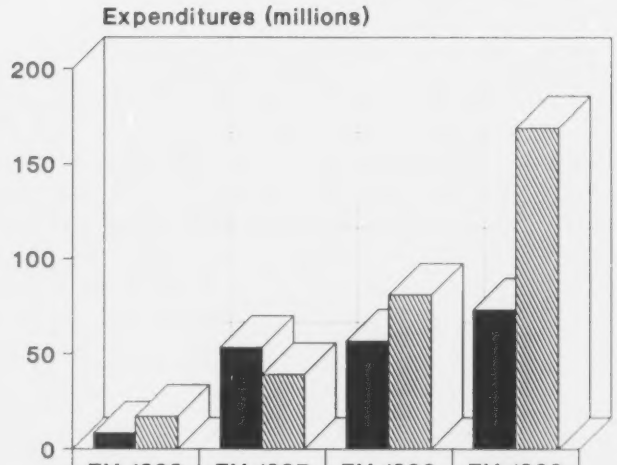
The primary supported employment model utilized in FY 1989 was the individual competitive employment approach. A total of 57.9 percent of the supported employment participants for whom a specific model was reported were served in the individual placement model. Mobile work crews (19.5 percent) and enclaves (16.9 percent) were the other primary supported employment models.

FUNDING OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Rehabilitation Services Administration Funding

Three sources of funds were attributed to RSA that have been obligated for supported employment. These include the following: Title III systems change grants awarded to the 27 states; the Title VI, Part C for-

FIGURE 5



	FY 1986	FY 1987	FY 1988	FY 1989
Rehabilitation funds	8.445	53.327	56.838	73.005
Non-rehabilitation	17.247	39.178	80.858	169.136
Total expenditures	25.692	92.505	137.696	242.141

mula grants awarded to all 50 states and D.C.; and Title I, Section 110 Basic State Grant funds that were identified as specific obligations for supported employment by the general agencies. The Title VI, Part C and Title I amounts were reported for the fiscal year in which funds were actually expended.

Figure 4 is an annual representation of the utilization of RSA funds during FY 1986 through FY 1989. The Title III and Title VI, Part C funds can only be utilized for supported employment. The Title I funds are the basic state grants used for a full range of services by vocational rehabilitation agencies. Total RSA appropriated funds reported expended in FY 1989 were $63.687 million, a 33.8 percent increase over the $47.569 million in RSA funds expended in FY 1988. The primary growth from FY 1988 to FY 1989 occurred in the expenditure of the Title I funds. The $20.331 million reported expended in FY 1989 represented a 98.5 percent increase over the FY 1988 Title I expenditure.

Funding by Other Agencies

In addition to the three primary sources of supported employment funds from RSA, nine other funding agents were identified in the survey. These include state matching funds to the RSA Title I grants and other state general vocational rehabilitation revenue, obligations by state agencies of mental health and mental retardation/ developmental disabilities (DMHMR/DD), Medicaid/Title XIX, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), state education agencies, Developmental Disabilities Planning Councils, and other fiscal agents that were not specifically identified. States continued to have very limited capacity to specify funds expended for supported employment through Title XIX, JTPA, or the state education system. The DMHMR/DD funds are the predominant funding sources for the non-federal or state vocational rehabilitation funds reported.

Figure 5 presents a comparison of the growth in vocational rehabilitation funds, federal and state combined, and funds from non VR sources that occurred during the FY 1986-1989 period. Clearly, the time limited expenditures through vocational reha-

bilitation resulted in substantial growth in the amount of non VR funds being expended to support persons with severe disabilities in competitive employment.

Non VR funds increased 109 percent to $169.136 million in FY 1989 as compared to the $80.858 million expenditure in FY 1988. The FY 1989 non VR fund expenditure was 132 percent greater than the $73.005 million expended for time limited services by the vocational rehabilitation system. The federal and state VR expenditure leveraged an increasing amount of non VR funds into supported employment during each of the four fiscal years surveyed by the VCU-RRTC.

CONCLUSION

The results of the four year longitudinal study conducted by the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center clearly indicate the positive impact of the national supported employment initiative. OSERS has taken a key leadership role in this federal/state cooperative effort. As a result, a number of persons with severe disabilities, traditionally unserved or underserved by vocational rehabilitation systems, have received services needed for them to enter and to remain in competitive employment. Also, noticeable changes have taken place in the funding and service system that now provides time limited and extended services to persons in supported employment. Key points on the important successes of the supported employment initiative and the critical areas that continue to need attention are:

- The number of reported supported employment participants rose substantially during each year of the FY 1986-1989 study. Total participants for FY 1989 were over 51,900. The increases that occurred in FY 1989 over previous fiscal years in new VR clients suggests that the growth in supported employment participation will continue into 1990.

- The OSERS Title III Systems Change grants appear to be of tremendous assistance to recipient states in implementing supported employment.

- The non-Title III funded states have also made substantial gains in developing supported employment opportunities. The FY 1989 survey results, with 49 of the 51 state systems surveyed reporting the availability of supported employment services, demonstrates that supported employment is now national in scope.

- The majority of persons reported participating in supported employment in FY 1989 had a primary disability of mild or moderate mental retardation. An increase did occur in the percentage of persons with a primary disability other than mental retardation.

- Expenditures by the vocational rehabilitation system on time limited services does leverage substantial non VR funds into supporting persons with disabilities in competitive employment.

In summary, the National Supported Employment Initiative has resulted in a substantial expansion of employment opportunities and employment-based support services for persons with severe disabilities. The federal plan to fund a new set of approximately 17 three-year Title III grants in early FY 1992 is an effective strategy to support continued systematic implementation of supported employment as clearly demonstrated by the positive impact of the original 27 Title III grants funded in 1985 and 1986. The continued expansion in the 1990s of the number of persons with severe disabilities working competitively with job site supports is dependent on a federal/state cooperative effort in close partnership with the employer community.

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TRAINING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

FOR CAREERS IN THE HUMAN SERVICES

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Every morning at 8:00, Rebecca leaves the apartment that she shares with two friends, traveling four blocks to the subway where she gets the uptown train headed toward her job. Rebecca works at a nursery school on the upper east side of Manhattan five days a week and is assigned to a classroom with four-year-olds. She is the teacher's aide in that room where there is also a head teacher and an assistant teacher. She is a most welcome member of the staff for the class of fifteen children where, over the past two years, she has assumed greater and greater responsibility.

When Rebecca first joined the teaching staff of the nursery school, the Director and the other teachers were told that she had a learning disability. They were instructed about how to give directions to Rebecca and were offered suggestions on ways that they could be helpful to her, especially in the beginning until she learned the routine of the classroom, the location of equipment and supplies, the names of the children, and the styles of the teachers.

As a teacher's aide in the classroom, Rebecca is often found reading books to children, helping to set up the snack, an art project, or music activity. She helps to supervise the children on the playground and accompanies the class on trips all over the city. Rebecca is the only adult in the classroom who knows how to use the new computer and is, therefore, the one who helps the children with all the software games that they are enjoying so much.

Rebecca loves her job. She gets tremendous pleasure from being with young children and feels greatly rewarded by teaching new things to them. She likes being a part of the team and has learned to ask questions when she is confused. She has worked on developing professional behaviors and has learned how to time her travel in order to be at work on time. She has even learned about what things are appropriate to talk about on the job and what things are just too personal for the work place. She is not making much money, but she is budgeting pretty well and sharing expenses with her friends from school.

Rebecca is a graduate of the Para-Educator Center for Young Adults at New York University. Before attending the program, neither Rebecca nor her parents ever thought that she would be able to live with the level of independence she has attained.

TRAINING FOR CAREERS

Like Rebecca's supervisor, many employers who hire people with disabilities find that there can be significant advantages, the most important being the opportunity to have dedicated workers who have overcome substantial obstacles and have proven to be able and reliable employees. However, workers with disabilities face a number of barriers in both get-

ting and keeping jobs. Adequate training of people with disabilities for appropriate careers remains an unmet priority. Too often, workers with disabilities are not sufficiently prepared in their choice of career. Many workers with disabilities are trained for positions in industries where jobs no longer exist; or, they are competing with able-bodied entry level employees who may, in other times, have looked to higher level positions.

In addition, job training for people with disabilities has, in many cases, been too focused on the job itself, not offering the client generalizable work skills such as social and independent living skills needed to keep a job. Also, people with disabilities are often steered toward positions in mail rooms, food service operations, and factories where job supervisors and co-workers may not be adequately prepared to work with an individual who has a disability.

HUMAN SERVICES AS AN ALTERNATIVE

Experience suggests that the growing field of human services is an excellent alternative to other types of vocations for workers with learning disabilities. This is true for a variety of reasons, including availability of jobs and an expanding need for entry level personnel. Perhaps most importantly, the field of human services offers an environment that is a positive one for workers with learning disabilities. In addition, training for careers in the human services results in the filling in of

many deficits in an individual's own skills, knowledge, experience, and self-confidence that is not readily provided through typical job training programs.

An example of this type of training program is offered through a specialized vocational preparation program at New York University for students who have severe and moderate learning disabilities. For twenty-five years, the Para-Educator Center for Young Adults (PEC) has been training students from all over the United States for careers in the human services, and assisting them in preparing to lead independent lives. The two-year program offers a university setting and affiliation for students who would otherwise be unable to participate in college life. The skills necessary for city living generate a wonderful feeling of self-confidence for the 18-28 year old group, many of whom have never lived away from home.

Students at PEC participate in a rigorous combination of courses in areas of study related to their major in the human services, such as child care or geriatric studies. Additional coursework reflects related studies in computers, social skills, art, dance, cooking/nutrition, current events, and independent living. Students spend approximately half of their time in coursework and the balance in their field placement, which is a nursery school, a day care center, or a nursing home. In their placements, students are treated as members of the staff and are required to act in every way the professional. Upon graduation, PEC students not only receive a certificate of completion from New York University, but also six university credits in their field of study. This qualifies them for many child care positions, such as with the New York City Board of Education, which has a new and rapidly expanding pre-kindergarten program.

A PLAY WITHIN A PLAY

By learning how to help others, students with learning disabilities who prepare for careers

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in the human services have the opportunity to fill in substantial deficits in their own learning. The process occurs naturally as part of their training and is properly identified as creating a play within a play. In class, where they are learning about the nursery school or the nursing home, students are first introduced to a concept as it affects their clients. Secondly, they are helped to draw parallels

to their own lives as young adults.

For example, in learning about young children entering nursery school for the first time, students explore the concept of separation anxiety. They learn to understand the emotions of the child, the fear of never seeing the parent again, the panic of being in a strange environment. For PEC students, this is often an enlightening experience. By learning how to help a child overcome his or her separation anxiety, the student is helped to deal with his or her own issues of separation that naturally occur for young people who are not only in a strange city but are developmentally much younger than their chronological age.

There are many other examples of how this curricula in the field of human services results in parallel learning. In a class in environmental studies, PEC students learn about air, soil, water, and their surroundings in an attempt to help them work most effectively with children or with the elderly in understanding and appreciating nature. It is, for many PEC students, the first opportunity for learning about these concepts themselves. The method of teaching has proven to be non-threatening. They are being taught about nature because the course is necessary to enable them to work at their jobs. They are learning for the purpose of becoming skilled as teachers' aides, a career which they are very anxious to pursue.

All courses at PEC are taught in this way. The class in creative movement teaches students dances and games that they can bring with them to the nursery school or the nursing home. In learning how to teach the dance to children or to the elderly, they must also acquire skills in balance, coordination, and fine and gross motor control. In art class, PEC students learn to work with the materials commonly found in the schools, including paint, modeling clay, construction paper, scissors, and glue.

In this process, students are encouraged to explore their own creativity and to express confidence in their ability to use materials and to complete a task. Woodworking, similarly, offers skills to students with materials commonly found in a child care or geriatric setting, but has the advantage of offering newly acquired knowledge and skill in measurement, the use of small hand tools, and home repair that is useful as the students prepare for independent living.

THE NEED FOR EMPLOYEES IN THE HUMAN SERVICES

The last decade has shown a dramatic increase in the number of working mothers. Additionally, parents have learned that early childhood programs can be enormously beneficial to young children in terms of enrichment and early stimulation. There-

fore, many families have opted to enroll their children in day care programs. Corporations have responded to the demand for child care by setting up facilities on the corporate site.

In spite of the great demand for child care, salaries remain among the lowest in the paid professions. As a result, the difficulty in locating workers is enormous and the turnover rate is very high. Many people who take positions in child care are untrained for these careers. Similarly, in the growing field of geriatrics, qualified, well-trained workers are very hard to find. As the American baby-boom population ages, a larger number of people than ever before will be looking for geriatric services. Since finding skilled workers in both of these professions is becoming increasingly difficult, hiring competent workers who have disabilities can only benefit the employer. Employers will be filling positions with employees who are well-trained and who view the job as a long-term career opportunity. Finally, employers are giving a chance to an individual who wants, more than anything, to become a tax-paying citizen, contributing to and participating in the mainstream of society with all other people.

For young adults with learning disabilities, a career in the human services offers many advantages. The school or nursing home setting is often a pleasant one, staffed with nurturing people who are sensitive to individual strengths and weaknesses. They are often more empathic and willing to train new employees than those found in other work environments. Most meaningful, however, is the wonderful feeling of confidence that a young adult gains as he or she is able to help another person. Significant learning is known to occur through this kind of relationship, resulting in immeasurable benefits to all concerned.

THE PEC STUDENT

Students at PEC fall into the borderline range of ability, yet experience the perceptual and learning deficits typical of people who have learning disabilities. They have substantial deficits in neurological functioning which are not immediately apparent to visitors to the Center. The student may demonstrate extreme organizational difficulties and have trouble with such routine but necessary activities as reading a map, filling out an application, following a schedule, or budgeting.

Historically, this group of individuals has fallen between the cracks. Many finish high school with the support of a special education program but are unlikely to pursue post-secondary options. Learning specific job skills is frequently not the problem. Many, who have been able to find employment, have had difficulty keeping it because they have not had the opportunity to learn organizational skills or to develop social behaviors appropriate to the work place.

In contrast, students who complete the two-year training program at PEC are largely employed (up to 80 percent) and are happy with their careers and their independence. For parents of these young people, seeing them happily employed in a safe and nurturing environment, having acquired the independent living skills needed to live away from home, manage their affairs, and hold a job, is indeed gratifying.

In addition to the Para-Educator Center for Young Adults at New York University, there are two additional programs that offer similar training to the same population of students. Although based on the PEC model, each program has developed unique characteristics particular to its region and the needs of its students. These programs are the Threshold Program at Lesley College in Cambridge, Massachusetts and the PACE Program at the National Lewis College in Evanston, Illinois. While other services exist at the post-secondary level for young adults who have learning disabilities, these three programs remain unique, not only for their specialized curricula in the human services, but for their ability to provide social integration into college or university life for young adults who have learning disabilities.

PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY

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INTRODUCTION

The decade of the 1990s brings with it many opportunities for the rehabilitation field to make great strides towards equality for people with disabilities. In order to meet the labor demands of the private and public sector, employers will be forced to tap previously untapped labor resources, such as minorities, migrants, women, and people with disabilities. One of the many rehabilitation efforts that will be called upon to help meet these labor market needs is the Projects With Industry (PWI) program administered by the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

The PWI program was established by the 1968 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. This legislation brought about a new dimension to the state-federal vocational rehabilitation program by involving private industry in the rehabilitation process. In this partnership, each member has a specialized role. These roles are based on the early realization that the private partners control competitive jobs and determine the training needs of their employees. In tandem, the rehabilitation groups know the capabilities of people with disabilities and have the means of delivering necessary services. The concept of an advisory council, another early development, was conceived as the medium to bring these forces together in a unified effort to expand job opportunities.

A PWI is composed of three essential elements: a linkage to the private sector, a training site, and a source of people with disabilities. The advisory council represents the linkage to business, industry, and labor. The training site is generally a rehabilitation facility. The State Vocational Rehabilitation agency refers individuals with disabilities for services. A natural outgrowth of this process is a strong and effective placement system that emanates from the advisory council.

In recent years, PWI projects have established working relationships with over 5,000 business corporations, unions, associations, and other entities for the placement of people with disabilities. It is estimated that over 125,000 PWI participants have been placed in employment since the beginning of the program, resulting in $1.25 billion in earnings and the payment of $225 million in taxes. These results reflect a progressive increase in funding of the program since its establishment and a continuing rise in the number of participants served and placed in employment.

LEGISLATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Amendments passed in 1973, 1978, and 1984 expanded and clarified the PWI program. The amendments contained provisions that:

1) emphasized the partnership between, business and reha-

bilitation requiring agreements between employers and rehabilitation organizations;

2) required projects to provide certain services or protection to individuals with disabilities including: training for employment in a realistic work setting, supportive services to help maintain jobs, modification of jobs, protection against job termination without reasonable cause, applicable minimum wage; and,

3) required PWI recipients to use other resources to cover a minimum of 20 percent of project costs.

Further program development changes occurred under the 1984 amendments. These changes included:

1) a requirement to develop a set of evaluation or program standards and to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the program;

2) a provision to make state vocational rehabilitation (S/VRs) eligible to receive PWI funding; and

3) a requirement that RSA was to continue funding all its current PWI projects through September 30, 1986.

The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1986 further extended these projects through Fiscal Year 1990.

The 1986 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act provided statutory language on the purpose of the PWI program -- to promote opportunities for competitive employment of individuals with disabilities, to provide appropriate placement resources, to engage the talent and leadership of private industry as partners in the rehabilitation process, to create practical settings for job readiness and training programs, and to secure the participation of private industry

Disabled Persons Served and Placed in Employment Under the PWI Program

FY	Number Served	Number Placed in Employment	FY	Number Served	Number Placed in Employment
1976	2,700	2,000	1982	11,000	8,250
1977	4,800	3,600	1983	14,000	8,500
1978	6,000	4,500	1984	14,000	12,000
1979	6,500	5,000	1985	14,000	12,100
1980	7,500	5,500	1986	14,500	12,000
1981	10,000	7,500			

• *The numbers served and placed in employment are based on yearly estimates reported in the RSA Annual Report to the President and Congress.*

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in identifying and providing job opportunities and the necessary skills and training to qualify people with disabilities for competitive employment.

PROGRAM DATA

From its initial funding at $900,000 in 1970 with three projects to its current funding level of $18,765,000 in 1990 with 113 continuation projects and 13 new projects, there has been a progressively significant increase in the number of clients served and placed into employment under the program as shown by the following table for the 11 year period from FY 1976 to FY 1986.

The following summary of information reported by PWI grantees for the period October 1, 1986 through September 30, 1989 further demonstrates the effectiveness of this program in serving and placing individuals with severe disabilities.

EVALUATION STANDARDS

The 1984 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act required publication by February 1, 1985 of evaluation standards to assist each PWI grantee to review and evaluate the operation of its project. Evaluation standards were developed under contract with Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (PSA). Their final report provided an overview of the PWI program, characteristics of participants, PWI project services and capacity building patterns, changes in employment and earnings, and analysis of PWI project management.

COMPLIANCE INDICATORS

In response to section 621(f)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act, a contract was awarded by RSA in September 1987 to develop indicators of what constitutes minimum compliance consistent with the previously developed PWI program evaluation standards. The indicators were published in final form in the Federal Register on August 31, 1989. The Compliance Indicators measure the following nine performance levels:

a) percent of persons served with severe disabilities;

b) percent of persons served who have been unemployed for six months;

c) cost per placement;

	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	Composite
Number of projects in sample	98	71	38	
Persons served	20,878	23,034	9,610	53,522
Persons with severe disabilities served	15,313	16,758	6,942	39,013
Persons placed	13,550	10,857	6,200	30,607
Persons placed with severe disabilities	8,543	7,182	4,633	20,358
Percent served with severe disabilities	73%	73%	72%	73%
Percent placed with severe disabilities	63%	66%	75%	67%

d) projected cost per placement;

e) placement rate;

f) projected placement rate;

g) change in earnings;

h) percent placed who have severe disabilities; and,

i) percent placed who were unemployed for six months or longer.

In accordance with section 621 of the Act, current grantees must have attained a minimum composite score of 70 points on the compliance indicators for the period October 1, 1988 to September 30, 1989 and must have met other application requirements in order to receive continuation funding in FY 1990. Beginning in 1991, the past performance of applicants, including their composite scores on the compliance indicators, will be considered in making new awards under the PWI program.

To meet the minimum standards for the two indicators that relate to persons served and placed with severe disabilities, at least 50 percent of those placed and served must be severely disabled. To attain the maximum score for these indicators, at least 76 percent of the persons served and placed must be severely disabled. Other indicators of severity of disability are those relating to the length of time that clients who are served and placed by the project are unemployed prior to entrance into the PWI program.

ON-SITE COMPLIANCE REVIEW VISITS

In accordance with the 1986 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, RSA will conduct on-site compliance reviews on at least one-third of the PWI projects funded in Fiscal Year 1987. Projects were selected for review on a random basis. The required 36 on-site compliance reviews were initiated in Fiscal Year 1989 and will be completed by September 30, 1991. The 1986 amendments further require that the newly developed indicators shall be used in determining compliance with program evaluation standards. Additionally, at least 15 percent of the grantees that were funded annually in subsequent years will receive on-site compliance reviews.

PLANS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1991

In FY 1991, approximately 90-95 new grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. All current grantees and others must compete for the $17,000,000 available for new projects. Only 13 projects initiated in 1990 will be continued in 1991. Past performance of current grantees, including compliance with performance indicators, will be considered in the 1991 funding decisions.

The proposed priorities for Fiscal Year 1991 generally cover the full range of projects currently funded by the program. Training that would be provided under four of the seven priorities for FY 1991 must be dictated by current and future employment trends and labor market needs and must lead to job placements at multiple work sites. Another priority focuses on providing training to individuals with disabilities exclusively at job sites where those individuals are expected to be employed. The other two priorities address specific needs of youths as they leave the educational institution or within a few years of their leaving the educational system. While not specifically stated, it is anticipated that projects funded under these latter two priorities will also be responsive to current and future employment trends and labor market needs.

TRANSFER OF PWI PROGRAM CONCEPTS

The success of the PWI model has proven effective in other arenas. The Private Industry Council developed by the Department of Labor is a direct adaptation of the PWI Advisory Council concept. Most recently, PWI has gained international attention in Canada, Brazil, Africa, Hungary, and the Pacific Basin where projects similar to PWI have been initiated.

HELP WANTED:

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES NEEDED

Mark Donovan
Director
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for
People with Disabilities

Vikki Washington is 19 years old and has just completed a student internship at Hewlett-Packard serving as a technical editor. Mark Anderson, 20, recently finished his student internship at Riggs National Bank, and has just been hired to work in the human resource division of CaterAir. Kristen Doherty, also 19, completed an internship and was then offered a full-time position at Marriott Corporation, entering data on employee applicants at its headquarters personnel services division.

After completing internships in a new school-to-work transition program, Vikki, Mark, and Kristen are embarking on careers that are likely to sustain them for several decades -- well into the next century. As they progress, they will be participating in an American workforce that is expected to evolve into a more diverse body than that of previous decades. There will be greater numbers of ethnic minorities. There will be a higher proportion of women and older people at work. But will there also be more workers who share a characteristic with Vikki, Mark, and Kristen -- people with disabilities.

The sheer numbers of Americans with disabilities, the anticipated labor gap, and the recent passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) imply that more people with disabilities will participate in the work force. But there are obstacles to overcome.

"It is not a question of whether or not you can do the job, but whether or not the job is accessible to you, and your co-workers receptive to you."

AN UNTAPPED LABOR FORCE

For students with disabilities, job opportunities are often temporary or non-existent. National studies have shown that well over 50 percent of the nation's 250,000 special education graduates each year remain unemployed after graduation, with many more underemployed. They represent a significant -- but untapped -- human resource.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is certain to accelerate the entry of more people with disabilities into the workforce. Without a doubt, it will increase employer awareness of people with disabilities. With this new federal legislation, employers can no longer overlook this important segment of the American population. However, while people with disabilities represent one of the best trained and qualified minority groups in the country, employers are often not prepared to receive them in the work place.

BARRIERS TO THE WORK PLACE

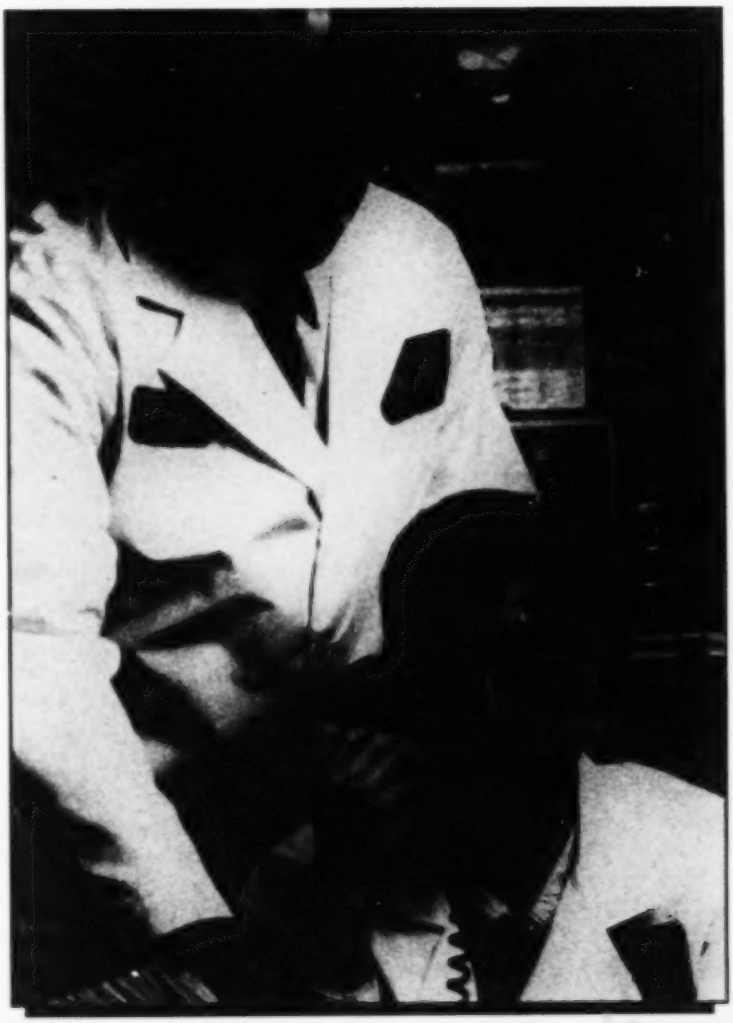
With the availability of so many trained and qualified people with disabilities, why are employers so seemingly reluctant to hire them? There are a number of reasons, among them:

where to find and how to hire workers with disabilities, concerns over accommodating them in the work place, and the fears of co-workers and managers about working with them. Employers worry about what it will cost -- in terms of lost productivity, increased liability, and lost sales.

BUILDING BRIDGES TO THE WORK PLACE

Traditionally, people gain their first job experience while in high school. The time for making that first move into the world of work is a vitally important time in every person's life. It is a time to gain the training and confidence so essential to starting a productive and successful career.

Research indicates one of the most effective means of securing successful employment for young people with disabilities is through school-to-work transition programs that have strong education, training, and support components.



"Bridges" is a new school-to-work transition program that has been developed by the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities, based on Marriott Corporation's positive experience in hiring people with disabilities. It was developed jointly with a team of outside experts in special education, rehabilitation and training, and corporate human resources.

A program of supported internships, "Bridges" has two important purposes: to provide students with disabilities the job training and work experience they need to enhance their employment potential as they prepare to leave school, and to help employers - private and public - gain confidence in employing people with disabilities.

The program gives young people with disabilities the opportunity to learn, grow, and be successful through orientation and training exercises, and internships matched to their capabilities and interests. "Bridges" also provides training for managers, supervisors, and co-workers, addressing issues concerning people with disabilities in the work place including supervision, communication, and accommodation.

"BRIDGES" AT WORK

"Bridges" employer representatives form a vital link between

the employer, the student, their families, and the school. Working with the school system, the employer representatives prescreen student candidates for intern positions and work onsite with students and supervisors to ensure a successful internship experience.

Employer representatives work closely with employers to identify potential internship positions, develop student internship matches, and provide onsite follow-up support to the student and employer during the internship.

"Bridges" student interns Vikki, Mark, and Kristen were assigned employer representatives who coached them on how to conduct themselves during job interviews and arranged interviews for them with companies where they could work and gain professional experience.

Of the interview process, Vikki Washington observed: "It gives the employer a chance to look at you as an individual and not as person with a disability." Said Mark Anderson of his employer representative, "They make it so much more receptive for a disabled person. You can go into a job with a lot more security. It is not a question of whether or not you can do the job, but whether or not the job is accessible to you, and your coworkers receptive to you."

Kristen Doherty's work in a busy personnel office has given her an additional perspective: "In my job, I have the advantage of seeing how people get hired and why they are hired. I am competing just like everyone else and it gives me a sense I am part of the real world."

The "Bridges" program has placed dozens of student interns like Vikki, Mark, and Kristen with employers in Montgomery County, Maryland, Chicago, and San Francisco. Funded by the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities, "Bridges" will be implemented in a number of major cities across America during the next several years.

Transition programs like "Bridges" give our nation's young people with disabilities the opportunity for full participation in society while helping businesses gain confidence in employing a valuable new source of workers. The opportunity is evident, the need is obvious: transition efforts are critical today -- because the future needs everyone.

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

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John Dewey, the philosopher and educator, once wrote that "to find out what one is fitted to do and to secure an opportunity to do it is the key to happiness." As Americans, we hold the belief that our society can provide its citizens with opportunities to pursue happiness, which is clearly spelled out as one of the unalienable rights set down by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. Where do workers with disabilities stand in regard to the pursuit of happiness, especially through employment? What can be done to improve the opportunities of workers with disabilities for meaningful work? What types of jobs are likely to be available in the future?

EMPLOYMENT FORECASTS

In many ways the task of assuring greater participation in the work force by workers with disabilities seems overwhelming. Yet, much is being done to move forward in the employment arena -- from legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination and requires access to many new employment settings, to continued research and development initiatives to enhance the potential of workers with disabilities to pursue employment. Yet, even with these developments, workers with disabilities will need to have an understanding of future opportunities in the work force.

Career counselors and those involved in career decision-making must continually wrestle with the ever changing nature of the work environment. Reality-based career exploration calls for an ongoing assessment of current labor markets and projections for the future. The study of employment trends addresses many factors, including demographic, technological, educational, and socioeconomic changes, and involves intensive analysis of how these complex variables interact to affect employment.

Fortunately, the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the U. S. Department of Labor regularly prepares projections of labor force growth, occupations, and industry labor needs. In a series of recent articles, forecasts were provided for 1988 to 2000. Using the moderate of three alternative projections, the labor force is estimated to grow at an annual rate of about 1.2 percent during this period compared with 2.0 percent for the previous 12 years (Fullerton, 1989), resulting in a labor force of about 141 million by the year 2000 (a net increase of 19 million).

The forecasts are for approximately 18 million new jobs with growth primarily taking place in the service sector, including increases in retail trade of 3.8 million, health services of 3.0 million, business services of 2.7 million, and government employment of 1.6 million -- manufacturing is expected to decrease from 19.4 to 19.1 million (Personick, 1989). The report also forecasts that the rate of growth for services will be considerably slower than in the recent past; that there will be a pronounced shift in manufacturing toward more highly skilled jobs; and that significant growth will occur in health and business services.

Finally, Kutscher (1989), in summarizing the forecasts, reported that the projected slower growth for the labor force, combined with an optimistic forecast for the economy to produce a larger number of jobs, could create low unemployment during this era. However, he identifies two critical concerns that must

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be addressed: the education of workers and productivity, both of which have to be improved significantly in order to have an economy capable of competing internationally.

FORECASTS AND WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

What do these projections mean for workers with disabilities? First, career choices must be made in light of the most recent forecasts for career opportunities. Those professionals and consumer advocates involved in career counseling for people with disabilities must remain attuned to changing labor markets and make sure that current techniques are being used in the counseling process. In addition, accommodations and technology are rapidly opening job opportunities and careers that were earlier considered difficult, if not impossible, for people with disabilities.

Second, education and training are critical employment prerequisites, especially for the better jobs. As a result of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, more students with disabilities are provided with mainstream education and training. This is particularly critical in light of the forecasts for the future. Continuing efforts toward access to education are essential to provide meaningful, secure, and financially rewarding jobs.

Third, the shift from an industrial to an information and service economy should make it possible for many more people with disabilities to enter the labor force, given that other conditions are maintained. Many of the jobs do not require physical exertion, and with options such as telecommuting, these jobs can be done by individuals with severe disabilities. A large number of the service sector positions may be open to individuals with learning disabilities. Therefore, the information and service economy appears to provide enhanced employment opportunities for many people with disabilities.

Finally, the nation's productivity is dependent on the contributions of all workers, including people with disabilities. Productivity is measured by economists and labor specialists in terms of output per worker. For several years, there has been a concern about the relative productivity of American workers in comparison with foreign workers. However, for workers with disabilities, the lack of opportunity to demonstrate productivity has been the major problem. This underutilized pool of talent could do much to improve the productive output of the nation.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Funded through OSERS' National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, the University of Arkansas Research and Training Center in Vocational Rehabilitation (RTC) has been involved over the past several years in studies to develop and test employment and career development interventions. Through a series of studies addressing both individual characteristics and elements in the employment environment, the RTC has produced a number of products that can be used in career planning, preparation, and initiation.

The selection of a meaningful career can be enhanced through a systematic review of key employment-related characteristics of the individual. Faculty at the RTC have developed techniques to facilitate the career planning process. These procedures represent a comprehensive approach that includes measures of aptitudes, interests, work habits, career maturity, job seeking skills, and social skills appropriate to work environments.

While career planning results in a profile of interests, aptitudes, career maturity, and career-related skills, skill development needs are also identified in the process. A companion series of career preparation interventions has been produced at the RTC, including Vocational Coping Training, Job Application Training, and Getting Employment Through Interview Training. These techniques involve information processing and social skills models to develop task performance, teamwork, supervision, and socializing skills, and behavioral techniques to develop job application and interviewing skills.

In addition to assisting people with disabilities in the development of employment skills, there is a concurrent need for research

to address the employment environment. Because of their reluctance to readily accept workers with disabilities, active intervention with employers is often necessary to market rehabilitation services and create employment opportunities. In response to the need for marketing strategies in keeping with changing markets, the RTC produced a job development and placement intervention, RehabMark, that can be used to systematically develop and maintain positive relationships with employers. This intervention can be used by consumer advocates, rehabilitation counselors, placement specialists, or others involved in identifying and developing job opportunities, and RehabMark training materials are now being disseminated by the RTC through a national training project.

Currently, the RTC has research and development activities in eight areas, all of which address employment issues. Studies of techniques for career and rehabilitation planning continue through a project to design and study model employability centers for career development. This effort has resulted in a comprehensive career planning service at the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center in Hot Springs, Arkansas. A companion project calls for the development and evaluation of methods to optimize involvement in the career choice process by the person with a disability.

A third project addresses the transition from school to work through the study of strategies that enable special and vocational education and vocational rehabilitation agencies to help employers and youth with disabilities in the transition process. This activity is being conducted in cooperation with the Arkansas Governor's Interagency Council on Self-Sufficiency, which includes representatives of the state's human service and education agencies. The research includes evaluations of the effectiveness of model demonstration programs located in predominantly rural areas.

Return to work after mid-career disability is a major national concern because of the many workers who leave the work force after this experience. A project is underway to study methods to reestablish work goals and plans, to reconnect the worker with the work site, and to renew a commitment to a career, using specific interventions in each of these areas. One of the exciting developments in this effort has been the systematic study of the Better Days Job Fairs program, conducted in cooperation with Days Inn of America.

The use of peer support to facilitate employment is being investigated by another study, using workers with disabilities as peer helpers for job seekers. This project uses the concept of the Jobs Rally program to bring workers with disabilities and their peers together to deal with the job search process. The approach lends itself well to a wide variety of settings, including independent living centers, schools, and rehabilitation facilities.

The role of independent living programs in the provision of employment services is being systematically studied by the RTC. Beginning with a national survey of the programs to determine their level of effort in the employment area, the project includes research on career development, peer support, and employment advocacy services by independent living programs. The results to date have revealed considerable employment-related activity by the programs and a great deal of interest in helping to address these issues in their communities.

The RTC is active in needs identification research through a project designed to lead to a national agenda to improve employment preparation services and policies -- a joint effort of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the Epilepsy Foundation of America, the American Council for the Blind, the American Foundation for the Blind, the Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Post-Secondary Education, Gallaudet University, the National Head Injury Foundation, and the Spina Bifida Association.

Another employment-related project involves research and training for a statewide supported employment project, a cooperative effort of the state rehabilitation, developmental disabilities, and mental health agencies. The project has served young adults from over the entire state, almost half of whom are 25 years or younger, with over 80 percent having mental retarda-

tion as a primary disability. Twenty-seven vendors across the state are working with local schools and specialized rehabilitation counselors in providing the services.

Finally, research is underway to prepare curriculum materials for the Life-Centered Career Education (LCCE) approach to career development, and materials are being developed in the occupational guidance and preparation domain to address six competencies: knowing and exploring occupational possibilities; selecting and planning occupational choices; establishing appropriate work habits and behavior; seeking, securing, and maintaining employment; developing physical and manual skills; and obtaining specific occupational skills. The approach is to integrate the employability assessment and development strategies into the LCCE methods.

In conclusion, this is indeed a dynamic era. Major changes in national legislation over the past twenty years have set the stage for an entirely different set of life experiences for workers with disabilities. These years have witnessed the opening of educational institutions, employment opportunities, and society in ways unforeseen in the early 1970s when major federal legislation for access to education and federal employment was being developed and implemented.

Forecasts for the future are favorable, with many new jobs being created between now and the year 2000. Resources are becoming more and more available to help people with disabilities acquire marketable job skills, and to open employment opportunities to them. However, the full participation of people with disabilities in American society is certainly not a reality -- far from it. Yet, to paraphase Winston Churchill, it is not the end, but perhaps the beginning of the end of the time when people with disabilities are denied the full pursuit of happiness.

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